

the guardian weekly

Level » Lower intermediate
Style » Lesson plan

December 2012

Welcome to the Guardian Weekly's special news-based materials to support learners and teachers of English. Each month, the Guardian Weekly newspaper selects topical news articles that can be used to practise English language skills. The materials are graded for two levels: advanced and lower intermediate. These worksheets can be downloaded free from guardian.co.uk/weekly/. You can also find more advice for teachers and learners from the Guardian Weekly's Learning English section on the site.

UK supermarket 'deals' criticised for costing more

Materials prepared by Janet Hardy-Gould

Instructions

Lesson focus: reading, reporting statistics

Materials: article, dictionaries

Time: 60 minutes

- 1 Tell students the lesson is about *promotions, discounts* and *special offers* in supermarkets. The article is about a particular type of offer called a "multibuy". Remind students that the prefix "multi-" means more than one. Then elicit ideas as to what a multibuy might be. Ask students if they have similar deals in their local supermarkets. **6 mins**
Answer: A multibuy is when you can buy two or more items at a special discount compared to the price when bought separately.
- 2 Explain that the article is about an investigation into multibuy offers in UK supermarkets. The prices are given in UK pounds so tell students how much £1 is worth in their currency. Direct learners to Student task 1. This is an example of an offer which was found during the investigation.
Normally, a 200ml bottle of sun cream was on sale for £5 at a big supermarket. But when it was promoted as a multibuy offer the price became £7 for one or £10 for two. Students read and then discuss with a partner. Would they be interested in this offer? Why?/Why not? **5 mins**
- 3 Show students photographs of more multibuy offers taken by readers of the Guardian newspaper. Hand out the Picture sheet (page 3). In pairs students read and explain what the problem is with each deal. Encourage them to say the prices correctly. If you have access to the internet in class go to the picture gallery on the Guardian website at: bit.ly/multibuypictures. Explain the meaning of "daft deal". Direct students to pictures 3, 4, 5, 7 & 10. **7 mins**
- 4 Tell students they are now going to read about the investigation. Direct them to the true or false questions in Student task 2. Go through any unknown vocabulary. Students read the article and find the answers. Encourage them to use dictionaries to look up a maximum of three words. Class feedback. What information did they find most surprising in the article? **15 mins**
Answers: a T b F c F d T e T f F g T
- 5 Students now do a classroom investigation into the habits and opinions of their classmates about special offers and promotions (either in shops or online). Give examples of yes/no questions eg *Do you often buy things because they are on promotion? Do you think supermarkets should stop multibuy deals?* In pairs students write three questions. They then circulate around the class, ask the other students the questions and note the answers. **15 mins**
- 6 Focus students back on the article. Ask them to find two examples of statistics about people's habits/opinions. They are: "Seven out of ten people told Which? that ..." (paragraph 6) and "It discovered that 37% of people did not calculate ..." (paragraph 7). Quickly revise the rules for reported speech plus the reporting verbs say and tell. Students write their own short report about data they collected and present it to the rest of the class. For example: "Nine out of fifteen people said/told us that they often bought things because they were on promotion." "We discovered that 67% of people thought that supermarkets should stop multibuy deals." **12 mins**

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'Money-saving offers' could cost shoppers more PA

Student tasks

1 Read this multibuy offer. Is this a good deal? Discuss with your partner

Normally, a 200ml bottle of sun cream was on sale for £5 at a big supermarket. But when it was promoted as a multibuy offer the price became £7 for one or £10 for two.

2 Read the article and decide which of these statements are true [T] or false [F].

- a ☐ The investigation was done by a consumer group called Which?.
- b ☐ The usual price of an Asda oven-ready pizza was £2.50.
- c ☐ One in 10 supermarket products go down in price when they are on a multibuy offer.
- d ☐ One very daft example of a multibuy offer was for sweets.
- e ☐ The majority of shoppers preferred discounts to multibuy offers.
- f ☐ Most people calculated if a multibuy offer was good value or not.
- g ☐ Clive Maxwell wants supermarkets to give their customers price information that is clear and helpful.

Article: UK supermarket 'deals' criticised for costing more

- 1 Supermarket multibuy deals that promise savings on items such as pizzas, yoghurts and crisps can leave UK shoppers worse off, according to an investigation by the consumer group Which?.
- 2 In the worst cases, Which? discovered that supermarkets doubled the price of an item when they began promoting it as a multibuy. It found that the big UK supermarket chain Asda was selling an oven-ready pizza at a standard price of £1, but when it went on to a multibuy deal, the price jumped to £2.50 for one or £4.50 for two.
- 3 Around one in 10 supermarket products increased in price when they went from the standard price to the new multibuy price, then decreased again when the promotion finished.
- 4 Which? also found that some products were almost permanently on discount or multibuy. It gave the example of a popular kids' yoghurt made by Nestlé, which was typically on sale for £1 for a pack of four at Tesco and Sainsbury's. But when it went on multibuy, the price was £2 for two packs, or £1.40 to £1.59 for one pack.
- 5 Some of the deals were "plain daft", said the consumer group. "We went around supermarkets and found packets of sweets that were 34p each or four for £3."
- 6 Multibuy deals are now very common in most UK supermarkets. But it seems that consumers are becoming increasingly unhappy with these promotions. Seven out of 10 people told Which? that they preferred discounts to multibuy offers.
- 7 The UK's Office of Fair Trading (OFT), which has been investigating the way prices are displayed and promoted in stores, has launched a code of practice to ensure that special offers and price promotions are fair. Eight big supermarkets say they will follow the new rules.
- 8 OFT chief executive Clive Maxwell said: "Household budgets across the country are under pressure and shoppers should be able to trust that special offers and promotions really are bargains. Prices and promotions need to be fair and meaningful so shoppers can make the right decisions."

At the time of publication £1 was worth approximately US\$1.60 or €1.25

Original article by Patrick Collinson, rewritten by Janet Hardy-Gould.

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Picture sheet

Read these multibuy labels. What are the problems with the offers? Discuss with a partner



Picture 1



Picture 2



Picture 3



Picture 4



Picture 5